



Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and the Public Speaking Classroom

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3 From the earliest roots of rhetoric, practitioners have emphasized the need for analyzing
4 one's audience before developing a speech. Almost every textbook in use in higher
5 education today follows Aristotle's ideas put forth in the *Rhetoric*. The main ideas about
6 audience analysis focused on discovering ways to convince audiences of the truth being
7 expounded by the speaker. The textbook for most basic public speaking courses spends
8 at least a chapter talking about audience analysis. In such chapters, authors discuss
9 adapting messages to various demographic, cultural, and individual differences.

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11 "Effective presenters try to learn as much about the members of their audience as they
12 can before communicating" (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009, p. 69). Kohrs,
13 Campbell and Huxman emphasize that anyone who speaks to an audience should ask
14 themselves "what will be necessary to induce the audience to take part in rhetorical
15 action?" "Who are they?" "Why are they here?" "What do they know?" "What are their
16 interests?" "What are their attitudes?" are questions asserted by Engleberg and Raimes
17 (2004, p. 33). As a result, communication educators teach the concept of audience
18 analysis almost ubiquitously, especially in public speaking contexts. Curiously enough,
19 rarely do public speaking textbooks spend any time in either the textbook itself or the
20 instructor's manual discussing how public speaking instructors should adapt their
21 message to audience diversity within their own classrooms.

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23 In 1989, Nance emphasized the need for culturally sensitive public speaking
24 classes. Communication departments often struggle with how to incorporate
25 multicultural elements into classrooms which not only face, but attempt to deal with,
26 cultural diversity in communication classrooms (Koester & Lustig, 1991). In support of
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3 this, Byrd (1995) suggests that public speaking texts and classes fall behind other types of
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5 communication classes in their incorporation of cultural diversity.
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8 O'Hara and Leyva (1996) note that including cultural diversity in oral
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10 communication classrooms is not without hazard – the relationship of professor and
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12 learner, classroom interaction norms, nonverbal transactions, assessment of time, and use
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14 of silence all offer potential disasters. However, this and other studies tend to view
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16 cultural diversity as “deficits to overcome instead of strengths to cultivate” (Yosso, 2006,
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18 p.22). When cultural diversity in the classroom is viewed as value-added instead of
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20 value-subtracted, it tends to be grounded in what is variously termed as “culturally
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22 aware” (Arends, Clemson, & Henkelman, 1992), “culturally competent” (Haberman,
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24 1996), or “culturally relevant” pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Ladson-Billings views
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26 culturally relevant pedagogy as a theoretical construct for cultural inclusion and
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28 celebration. She does this by focusing on students’ academic achievement, supporting
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30 students’ cultural competence, and promoting students’ socio-political consciousness
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32 (Ladson-Billings, 2002). Educational programs which are inclusive and focus on cultural
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34 relevance provide “space for all participants’ ways of knowing and associated funds of
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36 knowledge, language, and interests (Carrillo, 2004, p. 179), and make use of community
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38 resources to make curriculum relevant to the lives of students in the classroom (Gibson,
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40 1996).
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48 Many educators may still view college students in the stereotypical image of
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50 being forever young, white, and culturally homogenous. However, this view is becoming
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52 obsolete, if it was ever really accurate. Currently, minorities (including all cultural groups
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54 except for non-Hispanic, single-race whites) are roughly one-third of the U.S. population
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3 (Perlich, 2008). It is projected that by 2042 racial and ethnic minorities will account for
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5 the majority of the U.S. population (Bernstein & Edwards, 2008). In 2008 the U.S.
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7 Census Bureau reported that racial and ethnic minorities account for the majority in
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9 California, New Mexico, and Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Despite calls for
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11 cultural diversity in public speaking classrooms in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the
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13 changing demographics indicating the high probability of having culturally diverse
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15 classrooms, little has changed in textbooks or classrooms in the ensuing twenty years.
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21 One way to culturally adapt the public speaking classroom is to reassess the
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23 rational paradigm on which public speaking is based, and add the narrative paradigm
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25 (Fisher, 1984, 1985). Narrative paradigm states that all communication is narrative and
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27 that humans fundamentally come to know their world through stories. Fisher makes a
28
29 clear distinction from seeing narrative as a type or mode of communication within the
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31 rational paradigm and seeing narratives as foundational. Fisher states that using a
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33 narrative paradigm allows for “fact-value, intellect-imagination, reason-emotion” (Fisher,
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35 1984, p.10). A quick search of public speaking texts will demonstrate that narratives are
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37 listed as a topic under support or types of evidence, not as foundational experience of
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39 communication (see O’Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2004 for one exception).
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45 One objection some public speaking teachers may have is how does one evaluate
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47 a story? Although all humans are “natural” storytellers, we can learn to be more effective
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49 at applying narrative principles. Fisher states that not all stories have equal weight or
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51 impact. All cultures judge stories based on narrative probability and fidelity. In
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53 probability, the audience seeks out the stories coherence through “the consistency of
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55 characters and actions, the accommodation of auditors” (p. 16), and in fidelity the
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3 audience identifies the stories' truthfulness. Throughout Fisher's explanation of the
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5 narrative paradigm, he emphasizes the foundational nature of stories and that each culture
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7 values and assesses the stories based on cultural values. The narrative paradigm provides
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9 the theoretical foundation for adapting the public speaking classroom to add the
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11 narratives of the diverse cultures in our audiences.
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15 This paper will provide an example of analyzing a specific public speaking
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17 classroom audience, instituting culturally relevant pedagogy based on a narrative
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19 paradigm and results from this study.
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22 23 **Genesis of this issue**

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25 Utah Valley University is a moderately sized teaching university in Orem, Utah with a
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27 population of approximately 30,000 students. While all students are not required to take
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29 public speaking, taking this class can fulfill one of the general education requirements.
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31 Approximately 9% of the UVU student population is Latina/o. In the summer of 2008,
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33 an adjunct public speaking instructor who, at the time of the study was also the
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35 Hispanic/Latino Outreach Coordinator at UVU, expressed an interest in developing a
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37 public speaking section specifically for Latina/o students. This presented a unique
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39 opportunity to populate a section with Latina/os and use culturally relevant pedagogy in a
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41 public speaking course.
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47 After spending the summer examining culturally relevant pedagogy for Latina/os,
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49 we developed a curriculum, which included not only the basic course objectives for all
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51 public speaking courses at UVU but, additionally, components which responded to this
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53 pedagogy. Some things specific to culturally relevant pedagogy that have already been
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3 the focus of previous research (see Au & Jordan, 1981; Gee, 1992; Haberman, 1996;
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6 Ladson-Billings, 1995; Rodriguez, 1998) that we incorporated include:

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8 - Consciously creating social interactions to help students maintain fluid student-
9 teacher relationships
10 - Seeing cultural and linguistic talents and realities students bring with them to the
11 classroom as being value added (Durden, 2008)
12 - Encouraging students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for each other
13 - Including aspects of the students' cultural environment in the organization and
14 instruction of the classroom
15 - Making conscious decisions to be part of the community, support and instill
16 community pride in the students
17 - Providing students with the opportunity to engage in activities that closely
18 resemble those commonly carried out by practitioners in the community
19 - Offering opportunities for reflexivity. Reflexivity can give us the tools to better
20 understand ourselves and our actions (or inactions) (Lemke, 1995)
21 - Developing learning situations which are more congruent with those the student
22 has experienced in his own culture
23 - Integrating values, beliefs, and ways of acting and interacting with ways of using
24 oral and often written language
25 - Keeping a sense of uncertainty and willingness to question in the forefront of our
26 teaching. Teachers have to be willing to be risk takers – to not fall back on
27 traditional and safe teaching styles (Rodriguez, 1998)
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33 In addition to these more general culturally relevant concepts, “a good part of knowledge
34 (what people have a right to claim to know) resides not in their minds, but in the social
35 practices of the groups to which they belong” (Gee, 1992, p.41). We wanted to make
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Carol Lee notes,

Students from marginalized communities often feel disengaged from schooling. Many come to see the work that goes on in schools as having no purpose beyond the walls of the school building – besides helping one get a job, that is – and when they fail to see even that connection, the experience of schooling becomes even more problematic. Need to provide students with the ability to work through a community problem that is authentic, imminent, or historical; link with institutions within the community, draw on local and/or ethnic history, and/or engage the intellectual traditions of the communities in question (Lee, 1999, p. 277)

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3 Fillmore, even more specifically suggests, “Latino children learn two things from their
4 experiences in school: what happens in school has little relevance to real life and they are
5 losers in the learning game” (1990, p. 30). In fact, educators too often perceive the
6 culture and language of Latina/o students as deficits to overcome instead of strengths to
7 cultivate. Latino children often find the language and culture they have acquired at home
8 to possess little to no utility and have no value or use at school (Yosso, 2006). What
9 happens when this occurs? “Some fight back but many simply back off, rejecting the
10 world of school which seems to have little relevance to their real lives (Fillmore, p. 35).
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22 As a result of the findings mentioned above, we sat down to write a syllabus with
23 the intent to help Latina/o students see the relevance of public speaking concepts to their
24 daily lives, to have them learn from and feel connected with each other and with their
25 community, integrate personal values, use language that they felt comfortable with, be
26 reflexive about their experiences, and be open to change as instruction occurred.
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34 At the time we were developing the syllabus for our public speaking class and
35 finding such a need for emphasis on connections to the community and their daily lives,
36 we decided to incorporate service learning into the curriculum. We then asked four
37 elementary and middle school principals if they would be willing to allow our students to
38 share a message with a few designated classes; predominantly focusing on those classes
39 that had a high population of Latina/o youth. Ultimately, the principals agreed to permit
40 our students to mentor the minority students at their schools and allow our students to
41 deliver motivational speeches to their students as well.
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53 The outcome was a syllabus that followed course objectives and assignments as
54 required by the department, but one that moved away from it in important, culturally
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3 relevant ways, which will be described next. We also received IRB approval from the
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5 university for our research.
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8 Our newly revised “Introduction to Public Speaking” course used the same book
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10 and typical speeches as other campus courses while at the same time tailoring the
11
12 requirements to Latina/o youth to address and enhance their cultural narrative. These
13
14 mentors gave their required speeches to elementary and middle school students for the
15
16 performance section of the course. Two essay-based exams were given to allow students
17
18 to conceptualize public speaking principles in their own words. The students we required
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20 to write two reflection papers and weekly journal entries, thus promoting personal
21
22 reflection upon how course materials were influencing their own lives and the lives of the
23
24 younger Latina/o students to whom they were presenting.
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29 Five speeches were given. We saw the speeches as being somewhat problematic
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31 in that some of these speeches were not necessarily intuitive to the Latina/o narrative; a
32
33 narrative of storytelling. Although we covered typical forms of speaking: informative,
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35 persuasive, ceremonial, and introduction, we also had a dialogue about “what does
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37 Latina/o public speaking look like when your parents speak?” One of the things that
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39 came up in the Latina/o narrative was that it wasn't as linear as the western narrative with
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41 an introduction, three paragraphs, and conclusion. The first speech given for the course
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43 was called the Mi Testimonio (My Testimony) speech. This speech was an introductory
44
45 type speech and was also crafted to address the Latina/o narrative. This speech was
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47 going to be given to Latina/o youth about their experiences growing up. Students were to
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49 include some inspirational aspect of their story that would inspire elementary kids to
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51 consider education but given in a story telling format. Students were also allowed to
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3 deliver the speech either in Spanish or in English though only three students delivered it
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5 in Spanish. This was a very conscientious decision to change the syllabus slightly to
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7 address the Latina/o narrative. The other speeches included an informative speech about
8
9 the American Dream, and a persuasive speech where speakers encouraged students to
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11 graduate from high school and go on to college. These speeches were geared towards
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13 showing students (as well as making it more transparent for mentors as well) how
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15 education is an asset in their lives and how Latina/os and other minorities have something
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17 to contribute to society.
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22 The instructor for this course self-identifies as a person of color, as someone who
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24 grew up with a Hawaiian, Philippino narrative in Southern California but always in the
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26 back yard of a Latina/o community. He speaks Spanish fluently and has been fully
27
28 entrenched in the Latina/o community at the University for six years. This has allowed
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30 him to situate himself as someone who identifies with Latina/o students and to give
31
32 students a space in class where perhaps they would feel more comfortable being open and
33
34 honest in discussions and allowing a clear asset-based language (Yosso, 2006) to be part
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36 of the curriculum. This also allowed us to add, as part of the syllabus, a possibility for
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38 the inclusion of either English or Spanish, depending on students' desires. We decided as
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40 well, to spend the first six weeks of the course covering the public speaking textbook and
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42 additionally, preparing students to be mentors.
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49 This particular section was opened for registration but required instructor
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51 approval thus ensuring that only Latina/o students were enrolled. This was mainly
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53 accomplished through word of mouth in the multicultural office and personal contact on
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55 the part of the instructor. The final enrollment included 18 students - 4 male and 14
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3 females. All were Latina/o with the exception of one Native American and one Spanish
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5 speaking Caucasian. Most were fluent in English and Spanish. Students were asked to
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7 sign an IRB approved informed consent form the first day of class. All opted to
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9 participate in the study. Each student also signed a service-learning contract developed
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11 by the University. Each class was videotaped, students and the instructor kept ongoing
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13 journals throughout the semester. This material was used as data for the study.
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19 Findings

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21 While we began with a study of culturally relevant pedagogy and public speaking
22
23 course materials, we had no preconceptions of what we were actually going to find. In an
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25 interpretive study such as this, we started with a close reading of all interviews, reflection
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27 papers, field notes, and course materials using a grounded coding method (Corbin &
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29 Strauss, 2007). Close reading included reading through for a general idea of what was
30
31 happening, then rereading numerous times (at least five times) in order to get beyond just
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33 reading words to really understanding the ideas and patterns that were present. The goal
34
35 of the close reading was to identify general themes. Finally, we used axial coding where
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37 we looked for a closer understanding of what was actually happening (Lindlof & Taylor,
38
39 2007). In this phase, thought units were coded. Thought units were identified as
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41 comments that focused on one idea. As soon as another idea was introduced, a new unit
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43 was introduced into the coding. NVivo© was used to assist in managing and connecting
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45 thoughts from the typed journal notes. Both authors coded three student journals and
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47 differences in coding were negotiated. As we read and reread, themes became more and
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49 more refined until coding became redundant.
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4 After examination of all data, we grouped our findings into two main themes:
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6 public speaking course reflections and comments concerning students mentoring work
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8 with the elementary and middle school students. In order to clarify roles, UVU students
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10 will be referred to as mentors to distinguish between them and the elementary and middle
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12 school students. All quotes are written verbatim. To provide confidentiality, only first
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14 initials are used instead of names. One hundred percent of the text was coded but three
15
16 percent was not included in this paper. This percentage included comments about things
17
18 students were doing outside of school such as work or dating.
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22 23 **Public Speaking Course**

24
25 Three themes emerged from 99 total thought units which included speaking to school
26
27 students (53), cultural issues (23), and cultural pedagogy teaching techniques (23).
28
29

30 *Speaking to Elementary and Middle School Students*

31
32 The speaking to elementary and middle school students theme provides an important
33
34 connection between the mentoring experience and the public speaking class. Out of the
35
36 53 thought units, mentors commented on connecting to a real world audience (10),
37
38 having a chance to influence young Latina/o students (9), logistics and school teacher
39
40 expectations (10), speech given on culture (10), speech on the American Dream (7), and
41
42 other (5). In the following statement, the mentor emphasizes the challenge and benefit of
43
44 connecting with a real world audience as speeches were given to students.
45
46
47
48

49
50 As a public speaking experience, it was very beneficial because for the first time
51
52 in my life, I felt as if I was to speak to those who didn't want to hear me, not
53
54 necessarily a hostile audience, but a audience who didn't really care if I spoke to
55
56 them at all, and had no real desire to hear what I had to tell them. (Reflection #10)
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3 As this mentor pointed out, the connection to a real world audience provided a chance to
4
5 apply public speaking skills, and the challenge was both rewarding and difficult. Other
6
7 mentors made direct statements to students about the importance of going to college.
8
9

10 I spent 1 extra hour today and was able to give a speech to persuade the students
11 to go to college. I feel that this was my best speech and the students got it!
12 (Journal #10)
13

14
15 Mentors spoke of the importance of serving students and hoping that the services would
16
17 provide a way to influence young Latina/o students.
18
19

20 What I liked most about this class was the public speaking because in a short
21 amount of time I could get my point across. Even though my speech was at a
22 ceremony for Hispanic students with good GPAs and my story was about how I
23 did bad in school. I liked being up there in front of everybody seeing so many
24 Latinos and telling them what they can do if they keep on trying. (Journal #4)
25
26

27 As this mentor mentions, the ability to influence young Latina/o students through public
28 speaking provided an additional avenue to help students.
29
30

31 One theme was on the logistical issues and conflicting expectations between
32 mentors and classroom teachers. Twice mentors commented on the challenge of finding
33 opportunities to speak in the classrooms, having to come extra times, or stay longer in
34 order for the classroom teachers to be able to find time for them to speak. Sometimes
35 mentors spoke during recess time and students could stay in to hear the speeches. One
36
37
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43
44 mentor explains the challenge of adding speeches to the K-12 teacher's classroom.
45

46 Today was short. School got out early. (This is the 2nd time it happens) So I
47 requested a copy of the "random" days (which are normally on Tuesdays) that
48 they got off early. Hopefully that won't happen very often * I still haven't seen
49 the sheet – But we had a group meeting & I told them we're having our 1st speech
50 due next time November 20th – we will be pulling out kids we *mentor* to deliver
51 1 of our speeches. (Journal #4)
52
53

54 Mentors spoke about how the K-12 teachers saw the job of the mentors as helping
55
56 students in their schoolwork as the primary reason and getting a chance to speak as a
57
58
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1
2
3 minor part. In general, the speaking to students theme spoke of the importance of
4 speaking in the real world environment and giving mentors a chance to connect with and
5 inspire young Latina/o students.
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9

10 The Mi Testimonio speech provides unique insight into the course with Latina/o
11 college students. In the Mi Testimonio speech mentors spoke of their cultural
12 backgrounds and school experiences in the United States, which included insights on
13 their experiences of learning to adapt, handle personal and family struggles such as home
14 abuse, and the importance of being an example to other Latina/o students. In the
15 following quote, the mentor related her experience of learning in a second language and
16 the positive benefits the struggle provided.
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27 Well we immigrated here 11 years ago, to me it was really difficult growing up &
28 trying to catch on learning. I love that that happened though, because although
29 it's hard I'm Fighting to be better & prove people wrong. I have a reason to not
30 give up & for those who just started I can set the example to. (Reflection Paper
31 #4)
32
33

34 This mentor spoke about her cousin's experience in going back to Mexico and the low
35 wages he was paid. She used this example in her Mi Testimonio speech to get students to
36 see the opportunities available to them in the United States:
37
38
39
40

41 In my speech I told them about my cousin and what had happened to him. And
42 tied it up with how lucky they are to be here and that I hope they can achieve a
43 job where they get paid fifteen dollars or twice as much but for an hour not for a
44 day! (Journal #5)
45
46

47 The American Dream speech also provided insights into the mentor's educational and
48 immigration experiences and how education would provide career options and wealth.
49
50

51 Mentor statements included comments about hard work.
52
53

54 The American Dream to me means that if I work hard, set goals + have faith
55 anything is possible. It's NOT something that's handed to you, it's something you
56 EARN. I believe that everyone can achieve if + only if they set their sights on a
57
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59
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3 goal + do ALL in their power to achieve it! (Journal #2)
4

5
6 One mentor wrote about how the dream leads to career choices.
7

8 I think that my American Dream is that I can finish a career and that I can do
9 whatever I want for growing like personal and professional. (Journal #11)
10

11
12 On the other side, one student indicated the difficulty of the American Dream for an
13
14 illegal immigrant:
15

16 First of all I do have a dream but it is not the "American Dream." to me, and I'm
17 sure that to anyone else who is not from the US, sees the "American Dream" as
18 something wonderful and good and that once this dream has been reached, your
19 future life is going to be a good one. But to me it's not much because I have seen
20 and heard so many stories of people who believe and depend on this dream yet no
21 one has ever reached it and if they did, they are not happy. And so to me this
22 "American Dream" does not mean much, maybe because I know it's not true, I
23 don't know but yet I don't pay much attention to it anyways. (Journal #6)
24
25

26 In general, mentors viewed the chance to give speeches to K-12 students as a way to
27
28 connect class material with the community and what they considered "real life
29
30 experiences."
31
32

33 *Cultural Issues* 34

35
36 Mentors commented on cultural issues throughout the course. More specifically, students
37
38 commented on general cultural issues they face which developed as the second theme
39
40 that emerged from the data. Twenty-three mentor's thoughts were made on general
41
42 cultural issues: cultural background (8), discrimination (6), and legal status (3). Mentors
43
44 stated that culture is important and described the differences between cultures.
45
46

47
48 Hispanic to me means that I am a mix of different backgrounds. I know I am
49 looked at differently but am proud of my race and my ancestors that have made
50 me, and what I am. I can't imagine myself being any different race other than
51 what I am. My parents were both born in Mexico, my mom from Saragoza, and
52 my dad from Nuervo Lueon. Often people who were born in Mexico City don't
53 consider me Mexican but more American. My roommates think I am
54 Americanized, but deep down inside I just feel full Mexican with some American
55 culture. (Journal #15)
56
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3 Mentors identified discrimination as a problem. Discrimination was identified on
4
5
6 the university campus, work, and education in general.
7

8 Last semester in my math class someone started a conversation about how all
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Last semester in my math class someone started a conversation about how all
Mexicans should go back to Mexico. I felt very bad and I walked out and, ever
since then every other day one classmate would slur a slight comment about that
conversation. Since that happened I've become very uneasy about talking in my
classes because I'm usually the only Hispanic there. It was nice to be in a class
where there are others like you and you know you won't be discriminated on.
(Reflections Paper #4)

Mentors also identified legal status as a problem. Legal status may not be
applicable to all culturally relevant pedagogy. However, in this population, legal status
was an issue for both mentors and students.

There's such a long story to my immigration background that once it's safe to talk
about I will. By safe I mean once I have a legal status here I'd love to share my
story behind it. It's something that I know will have an impact on people (Journal
#7)

Though this was a public speaking course, mentors consistently brought in other cultural
issues that were relevant to their lives.

Cultural Pedagogy Teaching Techniques

Finally, cultural pedagogy teaching techniques emerged as the third theme. Mentors
made comments about the public speaking class that related to the culturally relevant
pedagogy component. Twelve times mentors specifically commented on the teaching
techniques associated with this course. Mentors stated that they enjoyed the class and
found it rewarding (7) and that the class with Latina/os was a good approach (5). One
mentor stated how much enjoyment came from having a Latina/o course.

I am so excited to be in this public speaking class for Latinos! I'm sure we will
learn a lot, become more united and enjoy helping other Latinos in the
community. (Journal 1)

1
2
3 Another mentor spoke of how the cultural component of the course was better than a
4
5 traditional public speaking course.
6
7

8 I wouldn't change the class because it was an intro to public speaking and I
9 believe that my skills did improve, and I got more out of the class than just a
10 normal public speaking class. (Reflection Paper 17)
11

12 This mentor stated that having a Latina/o class was helpful.
13

14
15 When I signed up for this public speaking class I was both nervous and somewhat
16 comfortable with going to class. Nervous because I did not like talking in front of
17 an audience little or small, and then comfortable because only Latino students got
18 to join the class. I thought I was not going to know anyone in the class, yet when I
19 got there I recognized a few faces, so I was happy about that for sure. I enjoyed
20 going to the classes and learning about public speaking. (Reflection 6)
21
22

23 Mentors viewed the inclusion of cultural relevancy as being a positive experience.
24

25
26 When reflecting upon this course, mentors viewed the experience of combining
27 the typical public speaking content with mentoring minority students as one of being
28 meaningful and full of opportunity to connect speech topics with cultural issues.
29
30
31

32 33 34 **Mentoring Experiences**

35
36 While giving speeches and having culturally relevant application in this class was viewed
37 as important by mentors, the actual experience of mentoring also emerged as a major
38 theme. As UVU mentors worked with students, eight categories emerged with 481 total
39 comments: working with students (295), excitement (63), positive and negative
40 experiences (57), learned from experience (30), role model (33), and need to share (3).
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48 *Working with Students*

49
50 Working with students provided the majority of the comments. Most of the 295 focused
51 on ways mentors worked with students and the process and feelings of becoming close to
52 the students with whom they developed relationships over the semester.
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3 Mentors, though working with students while in a public speaking class, and
4
5 giving their speeches to the students, also contributed in other ways such as helping
6
7 students with assignments either in class or given as homework, monitoring playground
8
9 activities, or helping students stay focused and on track during class time.
10
11

12 . . . I walked into J and R's science class and sat in the back with them. They
13 weren't really paying attention and R. was bugging J. a lot and just taking his
14 attention off the lecture. I made sure they stayed on track by just like leaning over
15 and telling them to, what to write for their notes, or just making eye contact with
16 R. made him quiet down. (Journal #16)
17
18

19 Working with students on specific assignments accounted for 57 of the 295
20
21 comments. However, the most comments (200) centered on relationships that developed
22
23 as mentors worked with students. Mentors felt connected to students both because of
24
25 ethnicity and shared experiences. Journal #3 contained this entry:
26
27

28 I joined a little group of Hispanic kids (5th graders). They told me where they
29 were from and surprisingly 2 of them were born here but their parents are from
30 Mexico. I loved it being how we related to each other about thanksgiving. Most
31 of them eat Mexican food instead of turkey for Thanksgiving. That's exactly
32 what my family does. . . . I observed how there were two Hispanic kids who
33 would converse to each other in Spanish. It made me think of how sometimes it's
34 easier for me to say certain things in Spanish to someone who also speaks
35 Spanish. Certain phrases can be so much for meaningful in Spanish, or in
36 English. Sometimes students feel more comfortable speaking their native
37 language.
38
39

40
41
42 Mentors wrote about how they loved working with students ("I am really starting
43 to enjoy working with J., it's the highlight of every Tuesday" – Journal #8), had high
44 hopes for them in the future ("We had a good talk through and I have high hopes for her"
45 – Journal #10), and hoped to continue their relationships after the semester was
46
47 concluded ("She was way sad I wouldn't be coming back, so I have decided to go visit
48
49 when I have time! I really enjoyed my time doing this and building these relationships" –
50
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60 Journal #10).

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3 Mentors also wrote about concerns and frustrations they had as they developed
4
5 relationships with students.
6
7

8 B. failed ALL his classes last semester...and he's so far failing again. He misses
9 a lot! I'm extremely concerned. He seemed like he doesn't care. When I was
10 talking to him – we set a goal to have him pass all his classes (he set that goal) but
11 his attitude kinda told me “yeah right” he said one thing & his actions & body
12 language told me another. I have about 12 kids & I really wanna just focus on
13 him. But I know there's other ones that need me. I'm not even a teacher yet. I
14 already HATE to see these kids fail. (Journal #8)
15
16

17 The other 38 comments all contained references to wanting to help and make a difference
18 in student lives. The following comment exemplifies this type of entry:
19
20

21
22 Today I went back to parent teacher conf. to help translate to spanish speaker
23 parents. It was a good feeling having the parents prefer me over caucasians. It
24 makes me realize that parents (hispanic) really want their students to look up to
25 other hispanic college kids, and that they also have more confidence, w/in our
26 people. (Journal #3)
27
28

29 Almost every mentor, in their journals, expressed an interest in the students with whom
30 they were working and a desire to connect with and help the students.
31
32

33 *Excitement*

34
35 Excitement was a feeling shared by most, if not all of the mentors. Comments in this
36 category were almost equally divided between anticipation before mentors began
37 working with students (36), and excitement during the mentoring experience (27). The
38 following excerpts exemplify the anticipation mentors were feeling:
39
40
41
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44

45
46 I'm excited 'bout this new experience. I hope to be a great role model & mentor
47 like I've had all my life. (Journal #7)
48

49 While slightly more mentors wrote about anticipating their experience and being excited,
50 many also wrote about their excitement as they progressed through the semester:
51
52

53
54 This experience helped me realize I really care about the Latino community its
55 really going to work if we start working w/the youth. The younger they are the
56
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1
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3 better. I'm very excited to become an Latino Educator of Tomorrow & have the
4 Latino youth look up to me. (Journal #4)
5
6

7 Journal # 14 just said simply, "It's funny how it fires me up!"
8

9 *Positive and Negative Experiences*
10

11 While excitement was somewhat of a catch phrase, mentors overall had positive and
12 negative experiences. Negative experiences were almost triple (42) those comments
13 about positive experiences (15) however, most of the negative experiences were not
14 focused on how the mentors were not enjoying the experience but rather on frustration
15 and concern for the students.
16
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22

23 Positive experiences highlighted relationships and the ability to help students.
24

25
26 When we had the opportunity to go to the schools, it was a great privilege to feel
27 like we were a part of something that would make a difference. One experience
28 that I had was with J. who was one of the Latino students that I was assigned to
29 mentor. This particular day he pulled down the pants of one of his fellow
30 students, so he had to go to in school suspension. He first had to help clean up the
31 cafeteria, which I helped him do, and then he had to sit in an office and do
32 homework, which I helped him do as well. While we were sitting there I could
33 feel his negativity towards schoolwork and I asked if he thought about ever going
34 to college. He replied that no he hates school and would not want to do any more
35 than he has to. I stepped back from the homework for a minute and explained
36 how I have always disliked school myself and how I would rather be doing other
37 things as well, but that I understand the importance of it so that I could have a
38 better future. I asked him what he enjoyed doing and then related how he
39 personally could have a better future and enjoy all the things that interest him if
40 he finished college. He seemed pretty interested in what I was saying and I could
41 tell that his wheels were turning. I posed the question again if he would consider
42 college and he replied that yes he would, and that he had never been explained
43 that before. From this experience I saw that this young man had never had anyone
44 take the time to invest in his personal interest. (Reflection Paper #10)
45
46
47
48

49 Negative experiences focused on not having enough time to spend with students
50 as was evidenced by this comment, "there is just not enough time to be as effective as we
51 should be and can be with these students!" (Journal #14), problems with school
52 administration not being as on the ball as they could have been, "Today I was way
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3 excited to start interacting w/the jr. – but it turns out they aren't going to have our
4 tracking list ready till Thursday so we left early . . . It sucked. I wanted to see them”
5
6 (Journal #4), and frustration/concern with the students themselves. This last concern had
7
8 to do with students not putting effort into their schoolwork or having circumstances that
9
10 prevented them from doing well. One mentor recorded:
11
12

13
14
15 I went for an extra hour and today I was with H. in his English class. His attitude
16 towards school is complete laziness. He does not care at all, and even if it is easy,
17 he won't do it. He'd rather stare at the wall! When I help him and encourage him
18 he does it cause he knows I won't have it any other way! I hope he changes his
19 attitude so he can improve! (Journal #10)
20
21

22 At the same time, mentors expressed frustration and concern about students having to
23 deal with situations out of their control:
24
25

26
27 My first [story] is about C and him having to take care of his siblings while his
28 parents worked. He didn't have time to do with his homework, and his siblings
29 need a lot of attention so that's the reason why he was failing and he is a very
30 bright kid who loves to learn and loves to do art (Reflection Paper #9)
31
32

33 Only seven total comments indicated mentors did not have enough time, but again, these
34 were comments about not having enough time with students not mentoring taking too
35 much time for the mentors.
36
37

38 39 *Learned from Experience*

40
41
42 Mentors overall felt that they learned a lot about themselves, their community, and the
43 students they worked with. Several mentors compared themselves to their students.
44
45

46
47 Public speaking class has given me the opportunity to serve others, like
48 elementary students, and my community, but mostly people of my race. It has
49 showed me what I can offer to my community, and this has really given me a
50 boost of what I would like to do with my life. It has also allowed me to find out a
51 little about myself, such as my strengths and weaknesses. (Journal #2)
52
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54 Some commented about how they learned about their community:
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Going into this class, I never thought that I would gain much knowledge about my community, and the ways of these young at risk teens. (Journal #16)

Still others wrote about what they learned about students with whom they interacted:

I really really love being with the kids at recess. I get to know more about them as I play & talk to them. I get to see all the different personalities some kids have actually opened up about their family problem & school life. Knowing more about them really allows me to understand their behaviors and reasons why they do or act in that way. (Journal #1)

The instructor made the following comment:

I would say in terms of personal reflection was how much I learned as a teacher that reciprocity and mutually beneficial partnerships - how much we learn, all of us, all parties involved learned - myself as an instructor, the students who were mentoring, the students who were being mentored, and the administrators that allowed us to partner. (Instructor reflections)

Overall, more than one third of all the comments in this subcategory (11) were focused on what mentors learned about themselves and how motivating that was.

Role Model

Typically mentors see themselves as role models (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). These mentors were no different. Twenty-one of the 27 comments in this category focused on how mentors wanted to be a role model and influence students for the better.

I think its really cute because they look up to you, they observe you & watch what you do & copy you. When I was assigned to my class at SC I thought the kids weren't really going to care if I was there or not because they were the sixth graders. I was wrong because the kids would come up to me and ask me questions about what school I was going to, were I had graduated from, and were I was from. The girls were in everything I told them, they asked me so many questions and that was good because they were interested in what I was doing. I told them about myself and how important it is to have an education. (Journal #12)

Several noted the need for specifically Latina/o role models:

I think that for the most part to most of us in the class this was an eye opener like it was real we were dealing w/kids that were really needing a Latino figure & w/teachers that need to be more understanding & OPEN-MINDED. (Journal #4)

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2
3 However, not typical of other mentor research, six comments focused on the concept of
4
5
6 “paying it forward” or giving back what you received.
7

8 I was so excited to go and be an example of a young Latino girl taking charge of
9 her life by getting a further education at UVU. I was the same as those kids when
10 I was their age, I didn’t really care about school. That is until my senior year, and
11 I had so many people that believed in me and helped me to get where I am now,
12 and I was super excited to be just that to the kids at C. middle school. (Reflection
13 Paper #16)
14
15

16 These students were seeing mentoring as an opportunity to give back to their community
17 and be a role model to others.
18
19

20 Six mentors wrote about the opportunity they had to be a role model and provide
21 service to their community, make a difference, and having a commitment to their
22 community. These comments reflect research, which indicates that Latina/os feel a need
23 to connect with their community and value education, which provides that connection.
24 This was part of our goal of helping students to make conscious decisions to be part of
25 the community and have pride in that community.
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35 *Need to Share*

36 Three mentors made comments about needing to share their experiences with other
37 mentors in the class. Another reflection from the instructor discusses this idea of sharing
38 further:
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45 What I noticed is that unless I was explicit with expectations and expectations of
46 mentoring, tutoring, the students didn't really kind of inherently have the language
47 to name and label their experiences. I would talk about a lot of experiences and
48 then a couple of times I had students crying and I didn't know why they were
49 crying. Afterwards finding out they said, "what you talked about today really
50 struck me that somebody finally said what I was experiencing and I thought I was
51 the only one experiencing this. I had no clue that other people were going
52 through this and what you're telling me is that there's a ton of Latino people going
53 through this and I didn't know it was part of my culture." (Instructor reflections)
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3 The category of mentoring experiences indicates that mentors connected with
4 students, had experiences that they learned from and motivated them in their own lives,
5 and enabled them to make a difference in the lives of the students.
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10 11 **Discussion and Conclusions**

12
13 One goal of any college course is to have students understand the content and apply the
14 content to research or applied settings. In analyzing the use of culturally relevant
15 pedagogy in the public speaking class, comments indicated that mentors understood how
16 real world experiences use public speaking tenets, and mentors grasped the basic tenets of
17 public speaking. The mentors identified the real world audience as both challenging and
18 rewarding. The public speaking class goal of achieving relevance by connecting with
19 their community appeared to be important to the mentors and was achieved with our
20 specialized class format.
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33 The mentors also saw the connection as a chance to influence young Latina/o
34 students in a positive manner and recognized that this was important for the success of
35 Latina/o students. Mentors also discovered logistical issues and experienced
36 disagreements over how mentors were to be used in the classroom. Although the
37 problems are not new for mentoring programs, they do remind us that careful preparation
38 for both mentors and teachers will help smooth out issues when adding a “real world”
39 audience to our public speaking classes. Based upon mentor commentary the goal to
40 have mentors feel connected to their community was achieved with some success.
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52 Using the narrative format for the introductory speech benefited the mentor and
53 students. Mentors were able to connect with the students because of the similar
54 experiences and the way the stories were told. How the stories were told was not
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3 explicitly stated. It would be interesting to know if the Latina/o students used the
4
5 narrative format or fell into the traditional outline format. It does appear that the goal of
6
7 having Latina/o mentors work together and with Latina/o students created an opportunity
8
9 to use oral and written language in a format in which they were comfortable.
10
11

12 The mentors appeared to learn from and enjoy the culturally relevant pedagogy.
13
14 Durden (2008) suggests that providing a classroom where educational experiences can
15
16 directly connect with cultural and linguistic experiences of the students is one of the most
17
18 important aspects of culturally responsive teaching. In general, for the students in this
19
20 study, the use of culturally relevant pedagogy appears to have provided a safe place for
21
22 students to discuss and speak about their unique life experiences and one in which they
23
24 felt they had a voice to contribute. In providing such a place, students felt their voice was
25
26 valued instead of subtracted (Yosso, 2006).
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32 In addition, discrimination is a difficult topic and having a culturally relevant
33
34 course may help students feel comfortable expressing these discrimination experiences.
35
36 This finding resonates with Buehler, Gere, Dallavis, and Haviland's (2009) study which
37
38 indicates that using culturally relevant pedagogy should include examination of the
39
40 struggle involved in enacting culture.
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43 Mentors became close to students over the course of the semester not only
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45 because of ethnicity and shared experiences but also as relationships were developed.
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47 They were excited to mentor students as well as present the speeches they had prepared.
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50 Mentors had both positive and negative experiences. Again, relationships were
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52 highlighted as mentors expressed frequently the great feelings that came from being able
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54 to help students and develop relationships with them.
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4 A frequent concern and frustration related to students that were not doing well in
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6 school because they had to deal with situations out of their control, such as taking care of
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8 brothers and sisters or having to deal with gang issues. These comments are surprising
9
10 given that previous research on peer mentoring showed that concerns and frustrations
11
12 have focused on mentors not feeling needed or mentoring taking too much time (Colvin,
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14 2007; Colvin & Ashman, 2010). In this study, mentors were more concerned about their
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16 students than about themselves. This may indicate a cultural difference between
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18 Caucasian and Latino culture of mentoring and should be studied further.
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22 Mentors felt that they learned about themselves, their community, and the
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24 students. In working with students and seeking to motivate them through their service
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26 and speeches, mentors were surprised at how motivating it was for their own personal
27
28 lives. Again, not typical of other mentor research, a number of mentors expressed
29
30 excitement about mentoring because it gave them the ability to “pay it forward” or give
31
32 back help that they themselves had received from others. These students were seeing
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34 mentoring as an opportunity to give back to their community and be a role model.
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39 While only three mentors commented about needing to share, we found them
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41 exciting given that we encouraged students to collaborate and share experiences but did
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43 not ask them to write about them. This idea of sharing was one identified as being an
44
45 important educational aspect for Latina/os (Yosso, 2006).
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49 Undoubtedly the mentors were more attuned to the needs of Latina/o students.
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51 Mentor comments indicate that an education in the U.S. is important and provides them
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53 with options. At the same time their own culture is important to them and the problems
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55 still exist in helping students at all levels assimilate without disappearing into the
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3 dominate culture. The ability to recognize the needs in the education and real world are
4
5 important parts of any outreach program. One of the positive outcomes of this study was
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7 that these mentors acknowledged the need for more Latina/o educators and role models.
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10 In summary, mentors found the addition of the mentoring experience to the
11
12 Latina/o public speaking class to be helpful in furthering the development of their public
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14 speaking skills by providing practical experiences to implement course principles.
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16 Furthermore, the mentoring experience empowered the mentors to understand their
17
18 ability to be culturally positive role models in the Latina/o community by giving them
19
20 experience in working with Latina/o youth and personally experiencing how important
21
22 mentorship is in changing the Latina/o educational experience. The mentoring
23
24 experience also gave students an opportunity to give fidelity and coherence (Fisher,
25
26 1985) to both their speeches and the context in which the speeches were given. Of
27
28 special note, none of the coded comments counter indicated these conclusions.
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34 A challenge for any academic course is having students understand and
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36 experience how “in class” principles work in the real world. This study was an
37
38 opportunity to examine how having culturally relevant pedagogy and the narrative
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40 paradigm embedded in a public speaking course provides academic **and** real world
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42 connections. Extending this study to include mixed ethnicities or instructors who do not
43
44 necessarily self-identify with the ethnicities of students could provide additional insight
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46 into how audience analysis and culturally relevant pedagogy can enhance not only public
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48 speaking class instruction and learning but also any other course taught in higher
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50 education.
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